

Ep #507: The Soft vs. Hard Life



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Brooke Castillo

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You are listening to *The Life Coach School Podcast* with Brooke Castillo episode number 507.

Welcome to *The Life Coach School Podcast*, where it's all about real clients, real problems and real coaching. And now your host, Master Coach instructor, Brooke Castillo.

What's up, my friends? My beautiful, gorgeous friends. I am so excited to talk to you. It is New Year's Day that I'm recording this, so Happy New Year.

I am in Barbados. I've never been to Barbados before, I highly recommend. I'm sitting outside on this gorgeous porch in this amazing villa, looking out at a pool with some gorgeous grass, a golf course and in the distance is the sea, is the ocean. It is stunningly gorgeous. It's the perfect temperature. I'm in my workout clothes, I just went on a long walk. Everyone else in America is freezing right now, and I am loving this 80 degree weather.

I'm coming to the end of a year of travel, and I wanted to talk a little bit about what it's been like to have a soft versus a hard life. And I got this concept recently. I was reading something, oh no, I was on Instagram and someone talked about that soft life. And I was like, what does that mean? Like, she's trying to get that soft life. I'm like, what does she mean by that? What does the soft life mean?

And then, of course, as soon as I heard that, then I started hearing it everywhere and everyone was talking about it. And I was like, well, I've completely missed out on this whole concept. So I started researching it and looking into it and understanding it. And I'm kind of interpreting it in my way to like what I see it to be for me personally.

And I've been thinking about it and talking to all my friends about it a lot. And so I wanted to share with you all, not so much to tell you how or what to do, but to give you something to think about and consider for yourself.

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Because as we're going into this new year, I think it's interesting as we set goals for ourselves and as we kind of see what we're going to require of ourselves, I think it's important to consciously decide what type of life you actually want to have and base that on your own personal opinion and not on what you think the world should have you do or how the world should have you behave, or what is more palatable to the world.

And that's kind of how I'm looking at this as I approach this next year of my life. So in terms of the soft life, the way that I've come to understand it is it's this life where it's actually, if you think about it, having a soft life, which is truly a life of privilege, right?

It is a choice you can make if you have enough money to be able to make this choice to have a softer life versus what I'm calling a harder life, right? Which is set up for much more challenge, much more hustle, much more work versus much more leisure and time and space and comfort in your own life.

I do think that there is kind of a trend that's been happening, I would say over the last five-ish years, towards a more soft life. A life of more spending quality time relaxing, spending quality time traveling with friends, like "living your life" versus a more hustle, hard work culture.

And I would say that this past year for me has been a pretty soft life. I've been focused on love. I've been focused on travel. I've been focused on relaxing. And if you look back at my career and what I've done over the past 20 years to build my company, to create my corporation, to create my brand to help thousands of people, most of that, I would say, has been the hard life.

And, to me, the hard life is the good life. So when I say hard life, I don't mean like I've had some hard life against my will that I've been suffering at. The way I'm using that term is like a hard workout. I've set myself up to work hard. I've set myself up to do hard things on purpose.

And I have loved the results of that. And I have loved the process of that. And I have always wanted to be someone who was as strong as I could possibly be. And I never really questioned that.

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And then one of my best girlfriends, Aprille Franks, shout out to Aprille, started really talking about having this softer life, right? And not working so hard and not hustling. And I was kind of like, what are you talking about? She goes, I just don't want to have to be the strong Black woman all of the time.

And obviously, for her, she's referring to a lot of challenges that I don't have to deal with, that I have the privilege of not dealing with because I'm white. And she really has had a steeper hill to climb in that sense. But the concept of her not wanting to have to be so strong all the time really made me think, really made me wonder about that for myself.

And I've been wondering about it a lot for the life that I want to create. And of course, I'm in a position now where it's a much easier choice because I have built enough success that it makes a soft life easy.

And I was reading about people that are creating soft lives for themselves even before they've had success, even before they have financial means to be able to make that very easy for them. And there was like a whole article written. It's like the soft life is harder than you think because you have to commit to it and then you have to be willing to sacrifice a lot of other things in order to maintain that level of comfort.

And I always like to question my own belief systems, my own perceptions about myself and my own life. I remember someone asking me one time when I set my goal to 100 million, and I have a whole podcast coming up about my hundred million goal and how maybe a hundred million wasn't enough to set it for. And I can't wait to share that with you. That's a crazy podcast coming up.

But she's like, "Brooke, when is enough going to be enough?" And I just thought it was such an odd question. Like, what do you mean? It's not like you get to this place where you're like, enough already with success. Unless your journey to success is hard and painful and in a way that doesn't serve you versus hard and awesome in a way that does.

And so this past year I really wanted to explore my desires that weren't as related to work, that were related to travel, that were related to being in a

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very conscious, loving relationship that were really focused on my friends. And, obviously I've been working the whole time too, but in a much less hard way, I will say, over this past year. And I did that very intentionally.

And I've learned a lot of things about myself and about who I want to be and the kind of life I want to have. And what I have found very interesting is a lot of people have said to me they really envy my ability to be able to just chill and to just rest and to just not be at it all the time.

And, for me, I haven't felt about it that way like, oh my God, this is the best. This is what I've been waiting for. This is the greatest. It's a very interesting contrast.

And I'm teaching a class on money, Money Is Your Friend in Scholars this year and I'm going to talk a lot about the softness of wealth and what that has done for me. And it's a very unexpected journey that wealth has created for me. And I actually see this in so many people that inherit wealth and in so many people that get wealth in a way that wasn't directly earned, that wasn't set up as a goal.

And it's almost like abundance can have a backfiring effect if you aren't very, very conscious about it. And so I'm going to be talking a lot about that in this class and I think it's a very –

I was talking to one of my friends about it, he got a trust fund when he was younger and he's writing a book about it. And just how the game of money and the idea of money can create an inadvertent softness that you don't want.

And so I always have identified for myself the teachers and the mentors that were tough on me, that were harder, that were more challenging, that were less soft, I would say. I think you have to know who you perform better for. Like what kind of coach are you going to perform better for? What kind of teacher are you going to perform better for? One that's kind of hard on you or one that has a little softer approach?

And for me, I've always learned the most and I've always grown the most from the toughest teachers. And most of you know that I'm a pretty tough

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coach. I do not apologize for really going in and pushing my clients and expecting a lot from them and believing in their growth.

And this is something that I've done with employees, too. I just had an employee that used to work for me several years ago, and this has actually happened quite a bit. And she reached out to me and basically was telling me about how the time that she worked for me was like the most expansive growth time for her, even though it was the hardest time because it was really challenging, the position that I put her in in the business and what I expected her to do.

And this was when we were starting up. That's when everyone was crazy working so hard in the company. And she's like, I didn't like it all the time, but I see so much of the growth that I have now in my life was because of that time. And that was a really amazing feeling.

But I understand it because I had this teacher, I still think about her. I've talked about her on the podcast before, Mrs. Gabil. And she was my algebra teacher in high school. And she was so tough on us. And all I wanted was her approval. All I wanted was her attention. All I wanted was for her to be kind and loving. And she just was not.

And the more I tried to please her, the more I tried to get her approval, the less I would get of it, but the more I learned and I always appreciated her as just such a tough teacher.

And I remember at the end of the year she was just like, I just knew you were a lot smarter than you knew. And you weren't showing up for the level of intelligence that you had in my class. And she goes, and so that's why I set that bar so high for you and challenged you so much.

And so when I think about my own life, I think that I am that coach to myself, right? I am that coach that is tough on myself, that has high expectations of myself. And I used to do it in a way that I couldn't reconcile. I think it's because internally I had this self-loathing for myself, right? So it was always fueled by this self-hate.

And as soon as I figured out how to love myself and be tough on myself, I feel like I got the ingredients for how to coach myself and also how to

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coach others. I am very tough on my clients, but I love them fiercely. Fiercely.

I always teach this to my students, too. It is not my job to get my client to like me, to approve of me, to think that I'm great. I am willing to sacrifice that because we're not friends when I'm coaching you, right? We're not in a situation where we're going to give each other platitudes or I'm going to commiserate with you about what's going on. I am going to be your coach and I am going to love you so fiercely that I'm willing to take you down the road and show you your own brain.

And, for me, that's hard, right? So when you choose me as your coach, which many of you have that are listening to this podcast, you're signing up for that intensity and that toughness on purpose. I have a lot of people from my mastermind that I did years ago that are always saying to me, I'm trying to find a coach like you. I'm trying to find someone that'll push me like you did. I'm trying to find someone that puts me on the edge of my seat and makes me feel like I want to throw up.

And I think it's because so many of us want that hard challenge in our life. We hire trainers that we know will push us beyond our comfort zone. I just hired a coach for the entire year and I'm going to be sharing that journey and that experience inside of Scholars and in the behind the scenes.

But I've hired someone that's a tough coach, that's hard on me. That isn't going to put up with any of my excuses or any of my BS. So that's to speak to the really kind of hard, we can do hard things. I want someone to push me. I want a hard coach. I want someone tough. I want someone that will show me sides of myself that I wouldn't see otherwise.

And so then the question becomes, can you have this "hard" life where you're setting yourself up for the hard things that you know will take you to that next level of growth in your life, but can you do it in a soft way?

And I've been sitting with this question. Is it better to be a softer coach? Is it better to be a softer person? Is it better to live a softer life? And for me, that answer is no. And it's also yes, in the sense that you have to balance it out in order for it to be sustainable.

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And that's the balance that I think many people don't find and they don't find it in a way that serves them. Because here's what I think most people are challenged by, is they think that the hard and soft life need to be balanced in each day. And that has not been my experience of effectiveness, of success. It's been seasons. It's been like months or years that are hard and then months and years that are then softer.

And, of course, finding some softness in each day is important. But I think you can get into the trap of thinking your life should be softer than it is and giving up on goals and giving up on success and giving up on challenges because it becomes "too hard." And then I feel like we become soft, right?

We become soft to our dreams. We become soft to being able to face our own fear. And when I think about emotional strength, when I think about the strength that I have developed as a skill, that emotional strength skill that I teach in Scholars is the most important ticket, it's the most important currency to creating the exact life you want.

And ironically, the hard life has given me the soft life, the option of the soft life. So I do think that there are people, there are a lot of people that I'll talk to and one of them is my best girlfriend, Kris Plachy, and we talk about this a lot, like this desire. She really has the desire for the soft life. She really loves just being on the beach and just appreciating the ocean and just being content.

But I always laugh at her because I'm like, but you are never satisfied there for long. She's one of the hardest working people I know. She's fiercely committed to her clients and to her business and creating content and wanting to help the world. And so I think sometimes she'll tell herself this shouldn't be so hard, I shouldn't work this hard. And I'm like, I don't think that that's true.

I think that there is a deep desire in most of us to make a contribution. And in order to show up to make that contribution, we have to face so many hard things. We have to face public scrutiny. We have to face failure. We have to face relationship challenges. We have to face just falling completely on our face in terms of concepts and ideas.

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And if we only want softness, we're always going to be hiding and running away from that. And I think there's a level of softness that comes from emotional strength.

And here's what I mean by that, when you are not afraid to feel your emotions, when you are not afraid of negative thoughts that are definitely going to come and negative emotions that are definitely going to come, when you're not afraid of that happening because you're a human being, you can relax.

You can be kind to yourself through these challenges. You can encourage yourself through these challenges. Never doubt yourself as you go to that next level, to that next version of yourself. You could be tough on yourself in a way that's fiercely loving. The reason you're hard on yourself is because you love yourself.

And that doesn't mean that we're ever quitting and beating ourselves up and calling that the soft life. That is the opposite of the soft life. Quitting and beating yourself up is the hardest life you'll ever live. It's the suffering life, right?

And so I think a lot of times people say, well, I'm going to let myself off the hook for this goal or I'm going to let myself not achieve my New Year's resolution or not do the thing that I said that I was going to do because I want to be softer on myself. And I think that's actually being harder on yourself. It's not believing in yourself. It's not connecting with yourself and supporting yourself and encouraging yourself.

I just got back from watching my son play golf in Miami and we spent a whole week there watching him play in a tournament that he just played so amazingly well in. And watching his mental fortitude and watching the amount of times that man has failed and gotten up and seeing the benefit that he's had from having a tough mom.

I'm a pretty tough mom on him and he has always said to me that he loves that because he feels like he's a tough kid because of it. And he's always coming to me for advice and for help and for coaching through his dreams. And he looks at me, you know, when I think about my goal of being an

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example of what is possible, he looks at me as an example of what is possible, even though his dream is very different than mine.

It's very powerful to have achieved such an incredible milestone in my own life of truly living my purpose of being that example, to him and to thousands of my clients and students and friends and associates. And I've done that by introducing and allowing myself to have the hard life, to have the life that includes all the hard things on purpose. I put myself in harm's way on purpose.

And I will say the soft life is beautiful and it's a privilege. And I think, for me, this year has been a real privilege because of my hard life. And as I go into 2024, I want much more of the hard life back. I want to work a lot harder on all of my goals this year. I'm like hungry for it to balance that back out.

I feel soft in so many beautiful ways, like in the pleasure and in the love and in the experience that I've had this year. But I also feel a sense of hunger to get back to a much more high level of work and expectation of myself.

And as many of you know, I'm going back into this year and taking back over all the coaching in Get Coached and Scholars. I'm going to be doing some coach trainings personally where I'm the one doing all the training, I haven't done that in years.

And I'm going to be doing some masterminds at my house to really work with the people that want to have the harder life and to achieve a level of success that most people will never achieve financially and in their businesses. And so I am committed to people who want the hard life.

It's not for everyone. Many people just want a soft life. And if that is the case, I am not your coach. I am not your girl. I am not your employer, for sure. Like it's going to be tough when you're around me, but you may see a side of yourself, you may grow in a way that you didn't even know was possible because you were willing to sign up to have someone introduce hard things that maybe you hadn't considered before.

That's what I'm going to be doing with my life. And I want you all to consider your own, like how much of your life – First of all, define those terms for yourselves. What does the hard life mean for you in a good way?

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What does the hard life mean for you in a bad way? And what does a soft life mean?

One of the things that we were talking about last night, actually, on New Year's Eve we were talking about soft money versus hard money. And what does it mean to have the soft money? Aprille and I were talking about it and I said to her, "I think soft money can come after hard money."

And again, this is another thing I'm going to talk about in my class, but it's like the money that you earn by working, actively working and earning money is the hard money, harder money, right? But then once you have that money and you can invest it and earn money on that more passively, that's the soft money.

So I like the concept of having both. And I like the conscious decision to decide, do you want to have a 100% soft life? And what does that look like to you? Do you want to opt out of the hard life? Because that's an option for many of you listening to this. Not for all of you, but for many of you. Or do you want the hard life for a while so you can create the soft life, so you can have that balance? Or do you want a mixture of both? And what does that look like?

What does that look like for you in 2024? And have you incorporated enough softness into your life that makes the hard life delicious? And that's definitely what I've done for myself. I love this hard life. I love the challenges that I've set up for myself with my coach, for my body, for my work, for my creation, for all my marketing, for my students. It's so awesome and so delicious.

And I want all of the challenges that come along with them, even the challenges that you say you don't want to have. Like you don't want to experience failure or criticism or challenging relationships. But if you're open to all of the hard life, then you can see what you're made of. You can see what you can accomplish. You can keep saying yes to all facets of life.

And one of the things that I think that it's done for me is allowed me to see corners of this world, to see corners of human nature, to see pockets of really great, awesome, kind, hard working people and really just nasty,

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critical, awful people. But I can see them all in a way with love and with understanding.

And I love that. I love that I have this mixture of hard and soft within me that I can utilize to live my biggest life. So what about you? Take some time, think about this. Welcome to 2024. It's going to be the best year I've ever had and I hope you can say the same.

All right, my friends, talk to you next week. Bye bye.

Hey, if you've ever wanted to work with me as your coach, now is the time to do it. You can join me in Get Coached in Scholars by going to thelifecoachschool.com/join. This is going to be the best year ever. It's your turn to change your life. Let's go.